[This transcript was created by LAI staff. It is as true a representation of the original as we could create. When a word was too difficult to decipher or was questionable we put those words in brackets. All text in brackets represents the voice of the transcriber rather than the voice of the letter writer. We have not maintained the spacing that exists in the original letters because that was not compliant with our accessibility standards. We are left justifying most lines.]

[citation information]
Collection title: Corcoran Gallery of Art and Corcoran College of Art + Design, Corcoran Gallery of Art directors' records
collection number: COR-0002-0-RG
Series 1: MacLeod, Barbarin and McGuire records
Subseries 1: Indexed correspondence
Box 2008-001
Folder 28: Letters 271-280

[Front of Letter 271]
Bierstadt, A., Waterville, March [date is erased]
March 23/74
Has offered his picture to committee for $5000. If it is purchased by anyone else will replace it with another. Encloses $5.00 to pay expenses of hanging etc.

[Letter 271]

Waterville Oneida Co., N.Y.

Wm MacLeod Esq.

Dear Sir,

[illegible] Committee have a letter from me wherein I offer them the picture for $5000. If bought within a reasonable time. Should anyone want the picture please let me know in which case should its removal become necessary I could replace [by?] something else. I enclose a money order for five dollars to pay the cost of hanging the picture.

Truly Yours,
A. Bierstadt

[Letter 272]

[Letterhead of Custom House, Baltimore, Md., Collector’s Office, March 23, 1874]

Sir,

I have been authorized by the Secretary of the Treasury, to admit to entry, free of duty and without examination, and to forward to the Collector of Georgetown, D.C. one case containing an oil painting and a small piece of Hildesheim Treasure, imported by steamer “Baltimore”, for the use of the Corcoran Gallery of Art.

It will be necessary for the Curator or yourself, to take the owners oath before the Collector at Georgetown, D.C. and forward it to some one here, with a duly authenticated Power of Attorney to make the entry, unless you prefer coming over yourself, to attend to the matter.

Very respectfully
Washn..Booth, Collector

F.S. Barberin Esq., Asst. Curator Corcoran Art Gallery, Washington, D.C.

[Back of Letter 272]
Custom Houses Balt: Washn Booth Collector, March 23, 1874
March 24, 2874
Has been authorized by the Secty of Treas: to pass case with oil painting to Collector in Georgetown. Requests “owners oath”, with Power of Attorney be sent to some one in Balt. to make the entry.

[Letter 273]

[Letterhead of the Office of the North German Lloyd, A. Schumacher & Co., Agents, 9 South Charles St., Baltimore, March 25, 1874]

F.S. Barbarin

Dear Sir,

We are in receipt of your yesterdays favor with enclosures and will have your box ready for shipment by tomorrow morning.

We succeeded to pass the box through our Custom House without a Bill of Lading but had to promise to furnish it, so you will please send the Bill of Lading, endorsed by return mail and oblige.

Yours very truly,
Schumacher
[illegible]

P.S. The invoice is kept by the Customs, but we will furnish your copy! [illegible]

[Back of Letter 273]
Schumacher, A. & Co., March 25, 1874
March 26, 1874
Will have box (with picture) ready to be shipped March 26. Requests Bill of Lading to send to Custom H, Baltimore.

[Front of Letter 274]
Colburn Bollinson, March 25, 1874
March 26, 1874
Ansd Mar 26/74
Requests that the Committee on Works of Art reconsider their decision with regard to [Wm?] Colburns pictures.

[Letter 274]

No. 1533 Fourteenth St., Washington, March 25, 1874

To the Members of the Committee on Works of Art

Gentlemen:

Mrs. Colburn has received a note from Mr. McLeod in which he informs her that you have decided that the two pictures presented by her for exhibition “are not of the standard of merit it has established for admission to this Gallery”.

Permit me to say that this decision is a source of much surprise to Mrs. Colburn, and to her friends, many of them persons who are thoroughly capable of judging of the merits, or demerits, of works of art, and who are among our most estimable, and influential residents. It is true that as a professional Artist Mrs. Colburn is not generally known here, except to her friends, and several of the Artists, owing to the fact that she has resided here a comparatively short time, and to not having exhibited her pictures publicly, preferring to await the opening of the “Corcoran Gallery of Art”.

At the advice of Dr. C.C. Cox, President of the Board of Health, I address this communication to you, respectfully soliciting a re-consideration of your decision and, at Dr. Cox’s advice, take the liberty of stating, as briefly as the circumstances will permit, Mrs. Colburn’s claims to the kindly consideration of all lovers of art, and more especially to those who are disposed to encourage those Artists who conscientiously endeavor by hard study, and close application to approach as near as possible to perfection.

It is proper, therefore to inform you of the circumstances of her education as an Artist, as a proper education is a very essential element of success. She is a daughter of Rembrandt Lockwood of New York, formerly an Artist of celebrity there, who painted Lockwood's "Last Judgement", a picture that has had no equal in this Country, and for which he was offered, by an English gentleman of wealth, $30,000, and that, too, so far back as the year 1855. Mr. Lockwood declined that offer preferring to keep the picture in this Country. Having placed it on exhibition in New York, it was soon thereafter so badly injured by fire that it has been laid aside ever since.

Mr. Lockwood studied, for several years, in Europe, and brought home with him many valuable sketches, made by himself, from the old masters, which sketches are now in Mrs. Colburn's possession, and which have been of very material assistance to her in the study of color, etc.

Subsequent to the destruction, (for so it really was) of Mr. Lockwood's painting of the "Last Judgement", he adopted Architecture as a profession, in which he has acquired considerable reputation in New York, and vicinity. I enclose, for the corroboration of some of the above statements, an explanatory cartoon of Mr. Lockwood's picture, executed by Johannes A. Oertel, a well known Artist, together with a letter of Archbishop Bayley, of Baltimore, formerly Bishop of Newark, New Jersey, addressed to Mr. Masters, who was the exhibitor of the picture in New York, requesting that they may be eventually returned to me.

I have stated the above facts relative to Mrs. Colburn's father in order to represent to the Committee that her education as an Artist has been a most thorough one, commencing with a three or four year course of studies in drawing, of the most approved French and English schools, which she accomplished at an early age, commencing her career as an Artist at the age of fourteen years.

At the age of sixteen, then residing at Newberg, New York, she painted for St. Patrick's Church, New Haven, Conn., three altar pieces as follows: (each 9 feet in height,) "The Agony in the Garden", from Ary Scheffer; "The Crucifixion", from Overbeck; and the "Transfiguration", from Raphael. Also for the Roman Catholic Church, at [Matteawan?], N.Y., an altar piece, "The Crucifixion", from Overbeck, (also 9 ft. high).

For the private Chapel of Mrs. Drayton, (a member of the old Livingston family, in New York,) at Rhinecliff, on the Hudson, she painted "The Entombment", after Ary Scheffer, containing five figures, life size. For a gentleman in Boston she painted, at the age of eighteen, a copy of [Murillo's?] larger picture of "The Immaculate Conception:, as well as [Madonnas?], Angels, etc., from Raphael.

That these pictures were well executed was attested by the fact that all the clergy of the place, as well as ~~by~~ other cultivated persons, constantly visited her and praised her work, not one iota of which was done by her father, as might have been supposed would be the case.

At this age her father was more than once earnestly solicited to allow her to become professor of drawing and painting in the large Convent situated on the Hudson River, not far from West Point, and also in the Highland Academy at Newberg, where Mr. Wiehl, the Artist, had held that position, all of which offers were declined. Some of her pictures, presented to Church fairs in Newberg, and Brooklyn, at that time, sold as high as $200 and $300, to those who were entire strangers to her.

In addition to the pictures named, besides many other copies from old masters, and others, she has painted forty-nine (49) original pictures, and eighty-two (82) portraits, making a total of nearly one hundred and seventy (170) pictures, which the Committee will no doubt concede to be evidence of her love of the Art, for these pictures were not painted by her because of any necessity of maintaining herself, but from an undeniable determination not to remain, to say the least, at the foot of the ladder.

It is my impression that the general understanding has been that pictures, of the various Artists, that were at all meritorious, would be exhibited in the side rooms of the Gallery, thereby affording the public an opportunity of seeing, together, specimens of the style, and execution, of the different Artists, and also affording an opportunity for criticism that might be of decided benefit to them, and it is but fair to suppose that the Artist who had sent a poor picture would be the first to ask for it's withdrawal.

Since the issuance of the Committee's Circular it has been a source of much conjecture as to what the standard of the Committee may be, whether the picture must attain the perfection of a Bierstadt, or Durand, a Church, a Leutze, (etc, etc) or whether the first general impressions, as above cited were to be the rule of action.

Having made a somewhat lengthy communication I feel that I must trespass no farther upon your attention otherwise than to earnestly request that the Committee, should they deem a reconsideration of their decision unadvisable, will do Mrs. Colbern the kindness of pointing out to her what to them, seems to be defects in the pictures presented by her.

The Committee will undoubtedly perceive that by doing so they may enable Mrs. C, to arrive at greater perfection, and thus cause the rejection of her pictures to redound to her future good.

I have the honor to be, gentlemen, very respectfully, etc.
[Rollin?] Lou Colburn

[Enclosures of Letter 275]
[Invoice from G.A. Lucas]
[Bill of Lading from Baltimore and Ohio Railroad]

[Letter 275]

[Letterhead of the Office of the North German Lloyd, A. Schumacher & Co., Agents]

March 27, 1874

F.S. Barbarin Esq, Asst. Curator, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir,

Your yesterdays favor with enclosure has been received, for which we are obliged.

Enclosed please find Balto & ORR Receipt for the box paintings shipped yesterday, also Copy of Invoice.

Our charges for shipping, wharfage and C.H. expenses amounting to $1.70 - you will please pay the RR [fgt?] and oblige.

Yours truly,
A. Schumacher & Co.
[illegible]

[Back of Letter 275]
Schumacher, A. & Co., Balt: March 27, 1874
March 28/74
Encloses Balt & O.R.R. Recpt. for Box shipped 26th, charges $1.70

[Front of Letter 276]
Water Colors
List of English Paintings in Water Colors, in possession of [T.?] Philp Esq.

[Letter 276]

List of pictures offered for sale to the Trustees of the Corcoran Art Gallery by Franklin Philp
1131 [illegible]

List of English paintings

[Letter 277]

N.Y. March 31st 1874

Wm MacLeod,

Having heard nothing of the Busts which were to be sent to the “Corcoran Art Gallery” fully two weeks ago, from [Columbia?] - I beg to ask if they have been received safely, if not I will write to [Columbia?] to know what causes their delay.

Respectfully,
M. Auze
19 East 31st Street

[Back of Letter 277]
Auze, M., New York, Mar: 31/74
April 1, /74
“ 1, /74
Desires to be informed if the “Busts” have been received at the Gallery.

[Letter 278]

Dear [Mc?]-

I want you to understand about the Claude Loraine [Lorrain] Volume - By express permission of her Majesty and of the Duke of Devonshire, her Majesty’s Engraver had especial permission to make exact copies of Claude Lorain’s [Lorrain] original sketches, in the British Museum, and in possession of the Duke. The subscribers for the volumes were the Queen Nobility, Members of the Royal Society, and eminent Artists, their names engraved in the book of which there were only 74, when they were supplied, the plates were destroyed and not others made, nor any copy from the work. The character of the undertaking, the distinguished subscribers, [?e.] show how rare the work was.

As it was not a book published for sale, the limited number, the style, trouble and expenses attending it, all show that it must have cost what I am informed - [20?] Guineas per volume. It is an heir-loom in the families of subscribers, cannot be bought in London, and singular how this volume was suffered to have there, on the death of the owner. It is the only one in America.

There are several works, copies of Loraines [Lorrains] pictures, but none of this rare and exquisite volume. I can dispose of it on time, to an Artist, but that does not suit me, and really, I feel so much interest in your Art Gallery, that I think this work, particularly, should enrich its collection.

Ever truly yours,
J. Goldsborough Bruff

[Back of Letter 278]
Bruff, J.G., March 17, 1874
Explaining character of “Claude Lorains” [Lorrains] Liber Studiorum which he wishes to sell to the Gallery.
Declined

[Front of Letter 279]
Vase, with regard to copy of letter, Paris Feb 4, 1874
With regard to the purchase of a Vase as a companion to the one purchased from Deck and now in the Gallery.

[Letter 279]

Paris 4th February 1874

Deck has but 2 of the large vases of the Corcoran size - one of these for the Corcoran would be 2500p. It is plain + of the uniform turquoise color like the bottle + pair you bought. The other 2000p. is a light blue turquoise ground with white + red (kind of brick red) ornaments on top + bottom + sprays + flowers of the same colors in the middle. He had both these when we were there. He says his prices for these vases vary from 1200p + even [less?] to 4000p according to success when they come out of the furnaces. He says in a month or so he hopes to have several on hand + will ask for them prices say from 1000p to 4000p according as they are successes in cooking + wanting in imperfections.

If there be one as good or as bad as the one you bought he will sell it for the same prices. If they are all perfect, he will not sell less than 3 or 4000p. So the best way is to watch + take the chance of getting one as good + at as low a prices as the first, would it be objectional to have it entirely different from the other? For myself I think it would be best to try + get it an entirely different color and decoration.

[Front of Letter 280]
Lucas, G.A., Feb. 20, 1874
Has purchased Cabanels picture of “Moses” for 25000 frs. Size of case 10x13 ft. Has also purchased Rebonet’s “Night” for 1250. Speaks of Statues for [Niches?] Has recvd notification of £1000 being placed to his credit.

[Letter 280]

41 Rue de l’arc de Triomphe, Paris 20th February, 1874

Mr. Wm T Walters, Trustee Corcoran Gallery of Art

Dr Sir,

I duly rcvd your favor of 6th Jany + in accordance to your instructions have purchased of Cabanel his picture of “Moses” for the sum of twenty-five thousand francs (25,000f). It was impossible to have him make any abatements on this price, which was the one named last year, at the time of your visit to his studio. The only concession he would make was to agree to furnish a frame. The price of 25,000f, at that time, being for the canvas alone.

It will require some time, say at least a month, to have the frame made and for the packing it will be best; as you suggest, to have the picture placed flat in case and not rolled. The Agents of the Baltimore Steamers here advised me that there will be no difficulty in sending a case of this size (say over 10ft x 13ft). The only reserve they make is, that if it cannot be stowed in the hold, that they will have the right to place it on deck. To meet this extremity it will be necessary to have the box covered with a [lined?] cloth, which will double the expense but not exceed that of packing, if faced to put it in a roller.

I have also, in accordance with your verbal instructions of last year, bought of Alboy-Rebonet his picture of “Night” which figured in the French Section of the Vienna Exposition. This purchase I have made for the sum of twelve hundred + fifty francs (1250f), which includes the cost of putting its frame in order.

In reference to your call for information for terra-cotta figures for exterior of building, I forwarded you a catalogue of models + specimens of the material of the house of Debay which is the best + I may say the only one here engaged in the fabrication of such ornaments. They are far, however, from being works of art + can, I think only be recommended for their modest price + temporary use, to make place in future for more serious works. Marble statues would cost from 3500 to 6000f each. These could be replaced advantageously by the Stone which is much used here for similar purposes + such can be executed artistically at a price not exceeding 2000f each.

I have recd advice from [G.S. Morg and Co.?] London, 9th February, that according to instructions from [Messr?] Riggs & Co Washington, they are prepared to meet my drafts, on account of the Corcoran Gallery of Art, for the sum of £1000 [illegible], and have replied that in case of wanting such sum or parts of it will draw on them through [illegible] [Hollingerer? [2?] Co.

I am yours most respectfully,
G.A. Lucas